

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 USIE-00 PM-05 INRE-00
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DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:ADR
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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 032544

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, FEB. 7, 1978

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON
BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 7, 1978:

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ONE, IF THE UNITED STATES MAINTAINS ITS BAN ON DIRECT
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MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE. OUR
POSITION ON THE TRANSFER OF OUR ARMS, ON THE ONE HAND,
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PARTICULARLY -- IS VERY CLEAR, AND I CAN REITERATE IT; BUT

WE DO NOT HAVE A PROGRAM OF INDIRECTLY DOING THAT WHICH WE SAY WE'RE AGAINST DIRECTLY.

Q: ALL RIGHT. COULD I JUST FOLLOW THAT UP? AS I UNDERSTAND THE U.S. POLICY, IT IS THAT THE AFRICAN PROBLEM SHOULD BE SETTLED BY AFRICANS. PRESUMABLY EGYPT IS INCLUDED AS AN AFRICAN COUNTRY.

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A: AS A MATTER OF FACT, OUR POLICY ON THAT, AS YOU KNOW, INCLUDES BOTH SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA; BUT IN TERMS OF THE POLICY -- AND I JUST WANT TO MAKE THIS DISTINCTION -- THE POLICY IS A CLEAR ONE AND A CONSISTENT ONE, AND THAT IS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WAY TO RESOLVE THIS PARTICULAR CONFLICT IS TO TAKE STEPS WHICH INTENSIFY, OR CAN INTENSIFY THE FIGHTING OR WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE EITHER SIDE TO SEEK A FINAL MILITARY SOLUTION, AS OPPOSED TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

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A: I, QUITE FRANKLY, WAS IN NO POSITION TO COMMENT ON IT.

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Q: NO. BUT I MEAN TODAY YOU'VE SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT YOU'VE TOLD THIS TO ISRAEL AND TO EGYPT. WE HAVE BEEN ASKING YOU FOR DAYS IF THE UNITED STATES HAD INFORMED ISRAEL OF ITS VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO ANSWER UP TO NOW. I'M JUST CURIOUS WHY IT'S COMING UP TODAY.

A: ROY, THAT'S MY FAULT. IF YOU ASKED ME THE DIRECT QUESTION, HAVE WE MADE OUR VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT KNOWN TO SPECIFIC PEOPLE, TO BE QUITE FRANK WITH YOU, I, EVEN NOW, AS YOU KNOW, AM RESISTING TRYING TO CATEGORIZE EVERYONE. OBVIOUSLY, HOWEVER, WHEN CERTAIN ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE MADE INS SOME QUARTERS, THE QUESTION HAS TO BE WHETHER OR NOT THE VIEW WAS MADE KNOWN TO THAT ONE IN PARTICULAR.

Q: THE OTHER THING IS, CAN YOU SAY WHEN YOUR VIEWS HAVE BEEN MADE KNOWN?

A: NO.

Q: I MEAN IS THIS A CONTINUING THING? IS IT JUST YESTERDAY OR IS IT THE LAST SIX MONTHS?

A: NO. I WOULD SAY THAT AS LONG AS WE HAVE BEEN MAKING THESE VIEWS KNOWN PUBLICLY FROM THIS PODIUM, WHICH IS AS YOU KNOW FOR SOME TIME, THAT THOSE VIEWS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE KNOWN TO OTHER PARTIES.

Q: THAT GOES BACK TO LAST JUNE. YOU MEAN?

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A: IT GOES BACK QUITE A WAYS. I CAN'T RECALL WHEN THIS PARTICULAR THING --

Q: TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IS THE FIGHTING STILL CONFINED TO THE OGADEN OR HAS IT EXTENDED INTO SOMALIA?

A: TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, IT'S CONFINED TO THE OGADEN.

Q: WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT THOSE CUBAN AIR STRIKES YESTERDAY, WERE YOU REFERRING TO AIR STIKES IN THE OGADEN REGION OR WITHIN SOMALIA'S BORDERS?

A: I WAS TALKING ABOUT INSIDE.

Q: INSIDE SOMALIA?

A: NO, NO. THE OGADEN.

Q: WHAT IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ISRAELI ROLE IN THE ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT WITH SOMALIA?

A: I DON'T HAVE AN INTERPRETATION.

Q: WOULD IT BE A CHALLENGE TO THE STATES, THEN?

A: I REALLY DON'T PUT IT IN THOSE TERMS.

Q: IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE ISRAELI EQUIPMENT IS BEING USED IN THE FIGHTING WITH --

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A: I MUST CONFESS TO YOU THAT I DO NOT HAVE HARD EVIDENCE TO OFFER ON THAT.

Q: IS IT FAIR, THEN, TO DEDUCE FROM YOUR RESTATEMENT OF THE POLICY, THAT THE AMERICAN ANSWER TO THE URGENT REQUEST THAT PRESIDENT SADAT SAID HE WAS BRINGING FROM SOMALIA AND CHAD FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS "NO?"

A: I THINK I SAID ON THE QUESTION OF CHAD YESTERDAY THAT WE HAVE TOLD THEM, AND WE ARE TRYING IN THE CASE OF CHAD, TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR REQUEST FOR THIRD PARTY -- I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WERE HERE. MAYBE I CAN PULL OUT THAT GUIDANCE, JIM.

Q: I WASN'T AND THERE IS NO TRANSCRIPT.

A: IT'S THE SAME THING. ON SOMALIA, OUR ANSWER IS "NO," BECAUSE OF THAT DIRECT CONFLICT.

Q: ONE MORE QUESTION, ALSO ON SOMALIA: PRESIDENT SADAT WAS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT NOT ONLY ARE CUBANS INVOLVED IN FLYING THESE MIGS, BUT ALSO SOVIETS AND SOUTH YEMENI. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION OF THAT?

A: LET ME TAKE THAT BECAUSE I CAN'T RECALL. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: CAN YOU REPEAT THE STATEMENT ON CHAD?

A: I TELL YOU IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL BE GLAD TO PULL IT OUT AND GIVE IT TO YOU. I DON'T THINK I HAVE IT HERE ANY MORE BECAUSE I USED IT YESTERDAY. NO, I DON'T HAVE IT. I PULLED IT OUT BECAUSE OF YESTERDAY. IF YOU'LL COME UP, I'LL GET IT TO YOU AFTERWARDS.

Q: NOT TOO LONG AGO, THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT-
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MENT, JOHN TRATTNER SAID THAT THE INJECTION OF ARMS TO THE AREA BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA WOULD NOT LEAD TO A

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WOULDN'T THE ISRAELI ACTION BE IN CONTRADICTION TO THE AMERICAN EFFORTS SINCE ISRAEL IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MAJOR ALLIES TO THE STATES?

A: I WILL STAND WITH WHAT I JUST SAID HERE TODAY AND WHAT HE SAID THERE, AGAIN WITHOUT TRYING TO CHARACTERIZE IT.

Q: THERE IS A REPORT OUT OF MOGADISCIO TODAY QUOTING WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES THAT SEVERAL THOUSAND CUBANS ARE ABOUT TO LAND IN ETHIOPIA FROM RUSSIAN SHIPS. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION ON THAT?

A: I HAVE NOTHING FOR YOU ON THAT.

Q: YOU'RE AWARE OF THE REPORT?

A: OH, I'VE SEEN THE REPORT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU HAVE ANY NUMBERS ON THE CUBANS AND THE SOVIETS IN ETHIOPIA?

A: I DID THAT YESTERDAY. 3,000 AND 1,000.

Q: THAT HASN'T CHANGED?

A : NOT TODAY.

Q: GOING BACK TO MY PREVIOUS QUESTION, IF THERE IS NO
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ETHIOPIANS AGAINST SOMALIA, AND IF YOU CAN BE REASSURED
THAT THEY ARE NOT, WOULD YOU STILL OBJECT TO THE ISRAELI
SUPPLIES?

A: I'LL TAKE THAT AS AN IFFY QUESTION. IT WAS MY CLEAR
UNDERSTANDING FROM WHAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT
THERE WEREN'T ANY RESTRICTIONS BEING PLACED ON THAT
ASSISTANCE, IN THE TERMS THAT YOU'RE RAISING.
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Q: INSIDE SOMALIA?

A: NO, NO. THE OGADEN.

Q: WHAT IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ISRAELI ROLE IN THE ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT WITH SOMALIA?

A: I DON'T HAVE AN INTERPRETATION.

Q: WOULD IT BE A CHALLENGE TO THE STATES, THEN?

A: I REALLY DON'T PUT IT IN THOSE TERMS.

Q: IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE ISRAELI

EQUIPMENT IS BEING USED IN THE FIGHTING WITH --
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A: I MUST CONFESS TO YOU THAT I DO NOT HAVE HARD EVIDENCE
TO OFFER ON THAT.

Q: IS IT FAIR, THEN, TO DEDUCE FROM YOUR RESTATEMENT OF
THE POLICY, THAT THE AMERICAN ANSWER TO THE URGENT REQUEST
THAT PRESIDENT SADAT SAID HE WAS BRINGING FROM SOMALIA
AND CHAD FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS "NO?"

A: I THINK I SAID ON THE QUESTION OF CHAD YESTERDAY THAT
WE HAVE TOLD THEM, AND WE ARE TRYING IN THE CASE OF
CHAD, TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR REQUEST FOR THIRD PARTY --
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WERE HERE. MAYBE I CAN PULL OUT
THAT GUIDANCE, JIM.

Q: I WASN'T AND THERE IS NO TRANSCRIPT.

A: IT'S THE SAME THING. ON SOMALIA, OUR ANSWER IS "NO,"
BECAUSE OF THAT DIRECT CONFLICT.

Q: ONE MORE QUESTION, ALSO ON SOMALIA: PRESIDENT SADAT
WAS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT NOT ONLY ARE CUBANS
INVOLVED IN FLYING THESE MIGS, BUT ALSO SOVIETS AND SOUTH
YEMENI. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION OF THAT?

A: LET ME TAKE THAT BECAUSE I CAN'T RECALL. I'M GOING
TO HAVE TO TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: CAN YOU REPEAT THE STATEMENT ON CHAD?

A: I TELL YOU IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL BE GLAD TO PULL IT
OUT AND GIVE IT TO YOU. I DON'T THINK I HAVE IT HERE ANY
MORE BECAUSE I USED IT YESTERDAY. NO, I DON'T HAVE IT.
I PULLED IT OUT BECAUSE OF YESTERDAY. IF YOU'LL COME UP,
I'LL GET IT TO YOU AFTERWARDS.

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Q: NOT TOO LONG AGO, THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPART-
MENT, JOHN TRATTNER SAID THAT THE INJECTION OF ARMS TO THE
AREA BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA WOULD NOT LEAD TO A

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WOULDN'T THE ISRAELI ACTION BE IN
CONTRADICTION TO THE AMERICAN EFFORTS SINCE ISRAEL IS
CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MAJOR ALLIES TO THE STATES?

A: I WILL STAND WITH WHAT I JUST SAID HERE TODAY AND WHAT HE SAID THERE, AGAIN WITHOUT TRYING TO CHARACTERIZE IT.

Q: THERE IS A REPORT OUT OF MOGADISCIO TODAY QUOTING WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES THAT SEVERAL THOUSAND CUBANS ARE ABOUT TO LAND IN ETHIOPIA FROM RUSSIAN SHIPS. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION ON THAT?

A: I HAVE NOTHING FOR YOU ON THAT.

Q: YOU'RE AWARE OF THE REPORT?

A: OH, I'VE SEEN THE REPORT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU HAVE ANY NUMBERS ON THE CUBANS AND THE SOVIETS IN ETHIOPIA?

A: I DID THAT YESTERDAY. 3,000 AND 1,000.

Q: THAT HASN'T CHANGED?

A : NOT TODAY.

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Q: GOING BACK TO MY PREVIOUS QUESTION, IF THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT THESE ARMS ARE BEING USED BY THE ETHIOPIANS AGAINST SOMALIA, AND IF YOU CAN BE REASSURED THAT THEY ARE NOT, WOULD YOU STILL OBJECT TO THE ISRAELI SUPPLIES?

A: I'LL TAKE THAT AS AN IFFY QUESTION. IT WAS MY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING FROM WHAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THERE WEREN'T ANY RESTRICTIONS BEING PLACED ON THAT ASSISTANCE, IN THE TERMS THAT YOU'RE RAISING.
VANCE

UNQUOTE VANCE

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